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VENONA

Soviet Espionage and the Decrypted

The classification of this briefing is: **UNCLASSIFIED in its entirety**

Approved for Release by NSA on 01-18-2018, FOIA Case #65028

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1943: The Effort Begins

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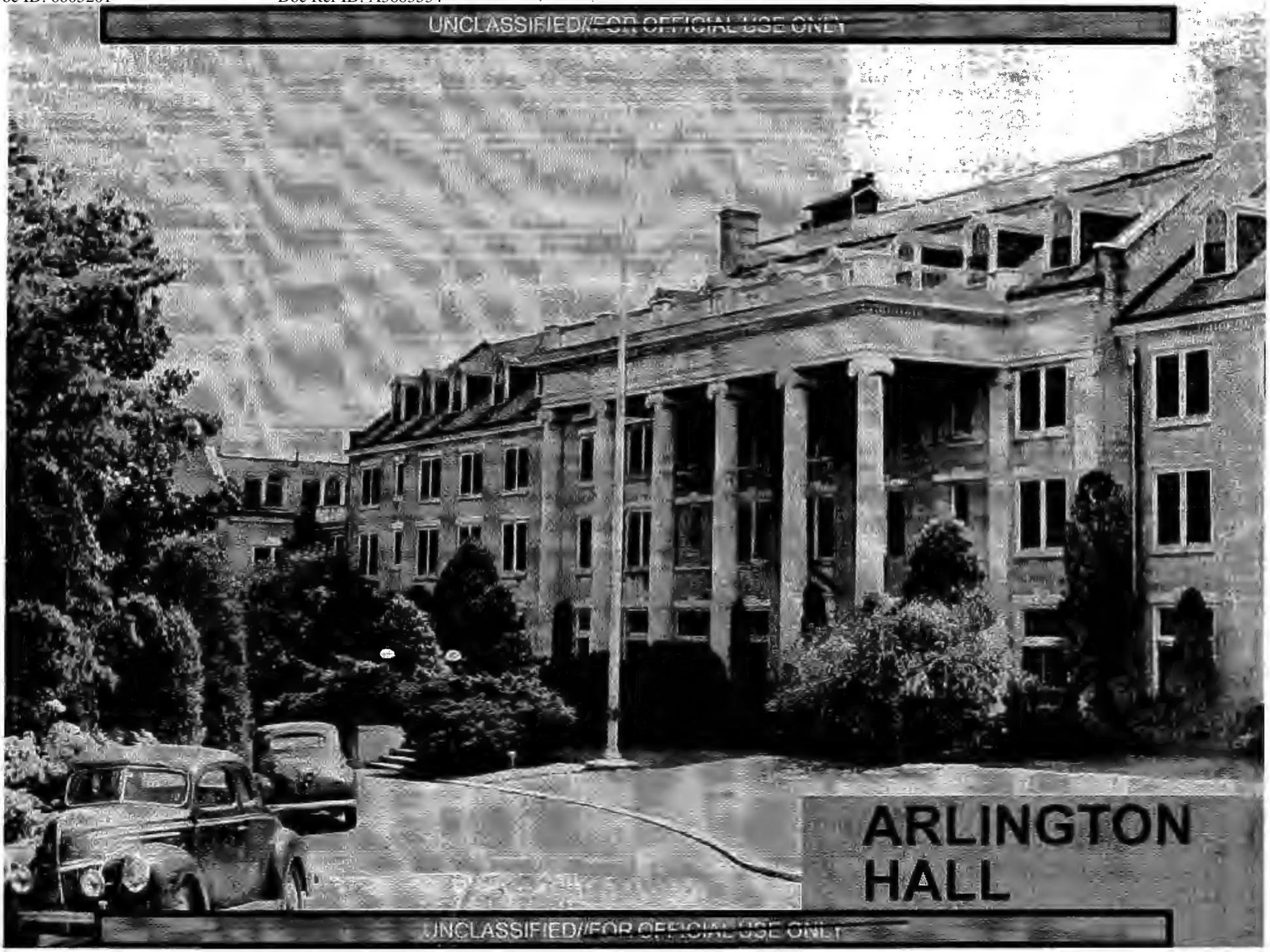
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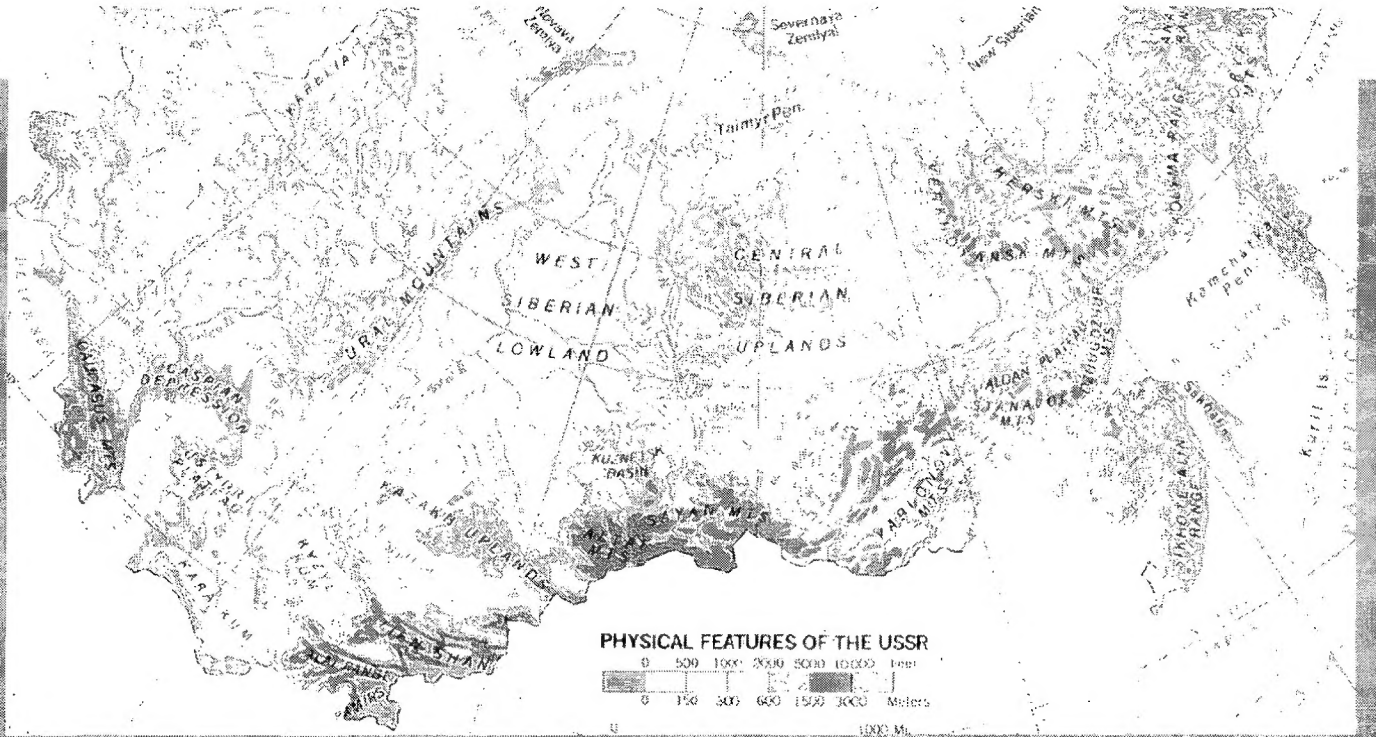
Targeting the Soviet Union

- Fear that the USSR would conclude separate peace with Germany
- Intentions toward Japan



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Gene Grabeel

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Genevieve Grotjan Cecil Phillips

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Meredith Gardner

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Soviet Cryptography

(b)(1)
(b)(3)-50 USC 3024(i)
(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

- Plaintext Message
- Conversion to four-digit group from codebook
- Add numbers from a one-time pad, [redacted]

[redacted]

Hypothetical Example

- **Plaintext** ... Victor ...

(b)(1)
(b)(3)-50 USC 3024(i)
(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

- **Codebook number:** 5531
- **One-time pad:** 5685
- **Cable text:** [redacted]

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Four-digit groups realigned as five-digit groups

1234 2345 0116 3456 4567

12342 34501 16345 64567

Early Decrypt

- "…. Scientists who are working on the problem –- Hans Bethe, Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi, John Newman, Bruno Rossi, George Kistiakovski, Emilio Segre, G. I. Taylor, William Penny, Arthur Compton, Ernest Lawrence, Harold Urey, Hans Stanarm, Edward Teller, Percy Bridgeman, Werner Eisenberg, Strassenman…."

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Five users of the system

- Foreign Commissariat
- Lend-Lease
- KGB
- GRU
- Naval GRU

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Some VENONA Statistics 1940-1945

KGB Messages:

- Approximately 8,000 messages sent
- 1,080 translations published

GRU Messages:

- Approximately 7,000 messages sent
- 446 translations published

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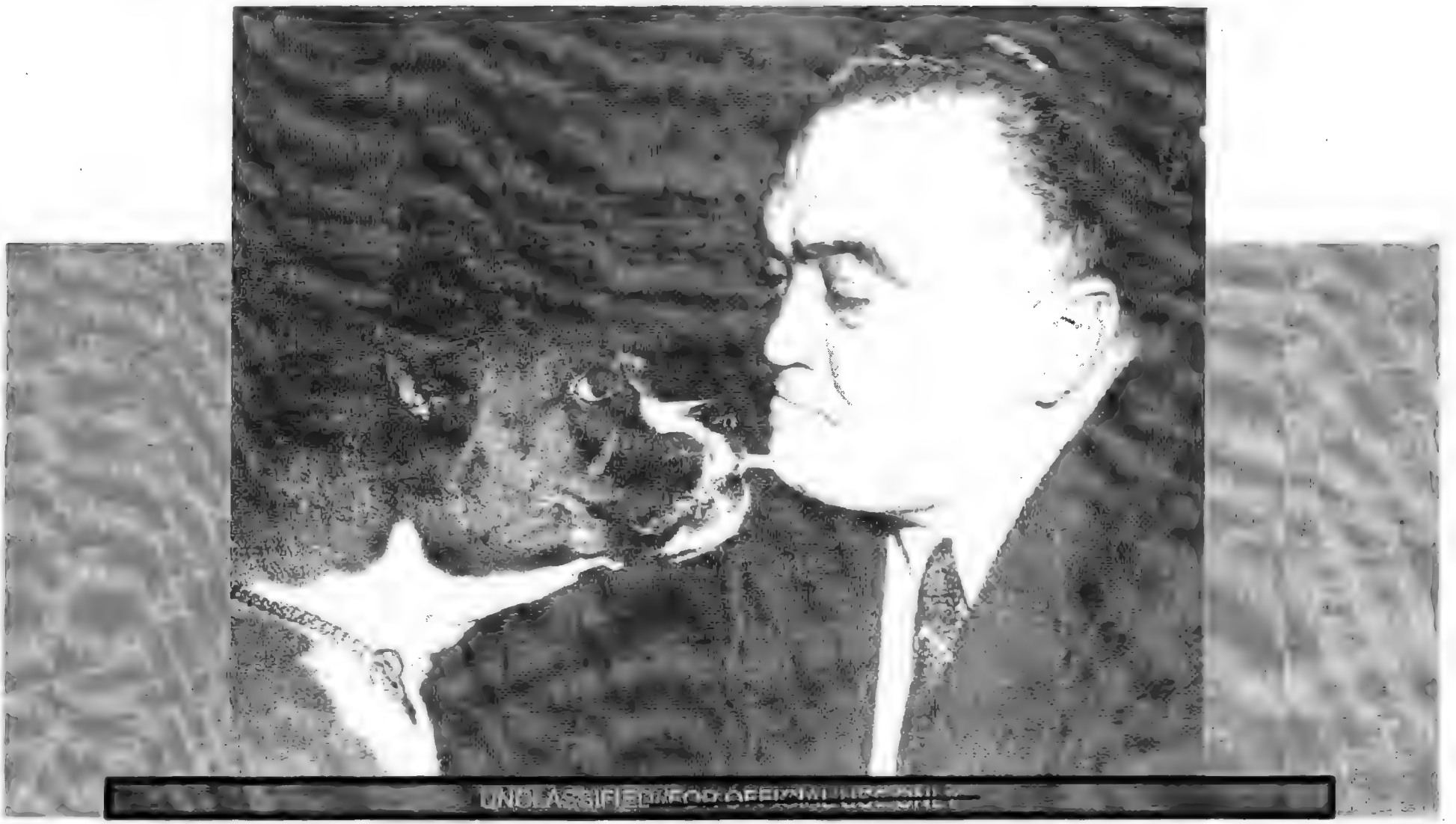
FBI



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Wesley Reynolds Robert Lamphere

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Covernames
KGB Jargon

NEIGHBORS = Soviet Intelligence Officer

COMPETITOR = Non-Soviet Intelligence Officer

PROBATIONER = Agent

FRATERNAL = Communist Party

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Covernames
Organizations

DEPOT = U.S. War Department

DOCK = U.S. Navy Department

DECREE = U.S. Lend-lease

LEAGUE = U.S. Government

HUT = Office of Strategic Services

Covernames

People

CAPTAIN = Franklin Roosevelt

BOAR = Winston Churchill

GRANDFATHER = Soviet Amb. Litvinov

HELMSMAN = Earl Browder

Covernames

Geography

COUNTRY = USA

ISLAND = Great Britain

SIDON = London

CARTHAGE = Washington, D.C.

TYRE = New York City

BABYLON = San Francisco

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LTG Pavel Fitin, KGB

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Soviet Espionage in the U.S.

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Some Important Cases

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Spies in:

- U.S.: White House, State Department, Treasury Department, War Department, Agriculture Department, Justice Department, OSS, MANHATTAN Project — plus high-tech aircraft industry, media + UK Foreign Ministry, UK MI-6, British Office of Security Coordination in North America

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Atomic Espionage

Codename for MANHATTAN Project: ENORMOZ

Spies in depth on MANHATTAN Project

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Klaus Fuchs

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FROM: NEW YORK
TO: MOSCOW
No: 1585
TO VIKTOR

BEK visited Theodore Hall, 19 years old, the son of a furrier. He is a graduate of HARVARD University. As a talented physicist he was taken on for government work. He was a GYMNAST and conducted work in the Steel Founder's Union. According to BEK's account HALL has an exceptionally keen mind and a broad outlook, and is politically developed. At the present time

H. is in charge of a group at CAMP-2.
H. handed over to BEK a report about the CAMP and named the key personnel employed on ENORMOUS.

Theodore A.Hall

Soviet Covername:
MLAD

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Harry Gold

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David Greenglass

- Machinist
- Drafted in 1943
- Through fluke, assigned to MANHATTAN Project
- Brother of Ethel Rosenberg

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Julius & Ethel Rosenberg

- Codename: ANTENNA
- Changed Codename: LIBERAL

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Julius Rosenberg

5 December 1944

- **"Expedite consent to the joint filming of their material by METR and Kh'YuS.... LIBERAL has on hand eight people plus the filming of materials. The state of LIBERAL's health is nothing splendid. We are afraid of putting LIBERAL out of action with overwork."**

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Ethel Rosenberg

27 November 1944

- **"Information on LIBERAL's wife. Surname that of her husband, first name Ethel, 29 years old. Married five years. Finished secondary school. A FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN since 1938. Sufficiently well developed politically. Knows about her husband's work and the work of METR and NIL. In view of delicate health does not work. Is characterized positively and as a devoted person.**

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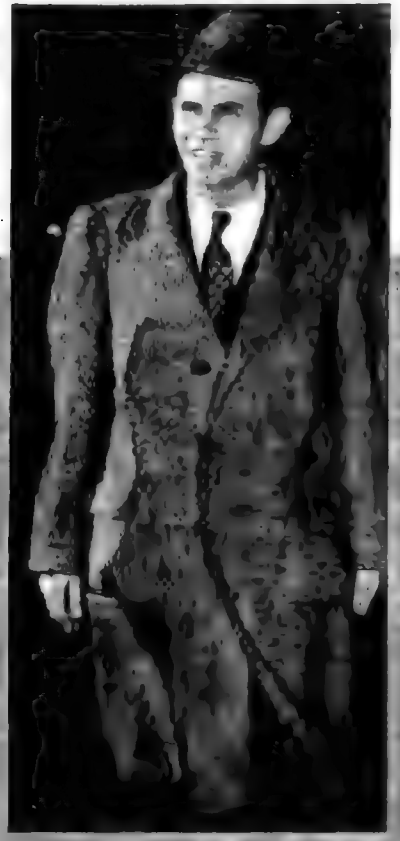
Alger Hiss



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ALES

30 March 1945

- **1. ALES has been working with the NEIGHBORS continuously since 1935.**

- **2. For some years past he has been the leader of a small group of the NEIGHBORS' PROBATIONERS, for the most part consisting of his relations.**

- **The group and ALES himself work on obtaining military information only. Materials on the BANK allegedly interest the NEIGHBORS very little....**

- **6. After the Yalta Conference, when he had gone on to Moscow, a Soviet personage in a very responsible position (ALES gave to understand that it was Comrade Vishinsky) allegedly got in touch with ALES and at the behest of the military NEIGHBORS passed on to him their gratitude and so on."**

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Judith Coplon

8 January 1945

"SIMA... Was very satisfied that she was dealing with us and said that she deeply appreciated the confidence shown in her and understood the importance of our work.

"SIMA's transfer to a new job was made at the request of her supervisors.... SIMA will probably start work on 15 February."

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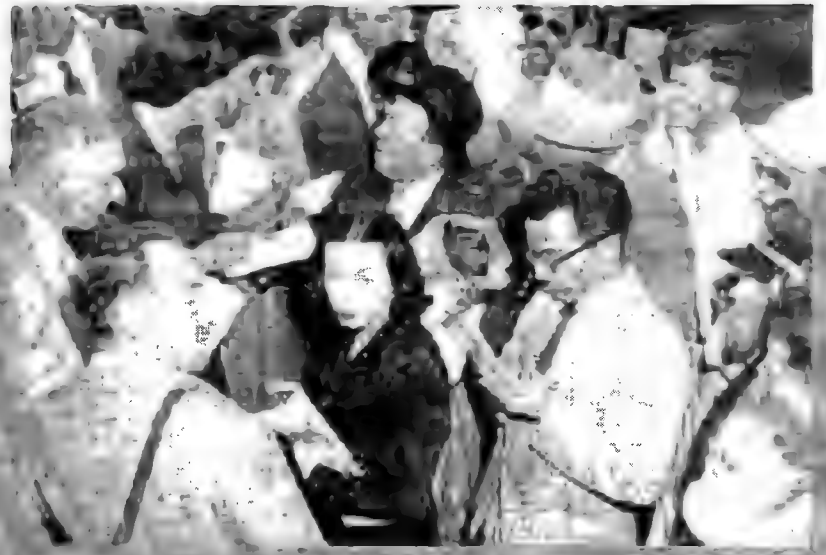
Judith Coplon



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Elizabeth Bentley

Covername: UMNITSA ["Clever Girl"]

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Related Reading

(available from CCH)

- The Venona Story
- Venona: Soviet Espionage and The American Response, 1939-1957
- History of Venona, Vols 1-3

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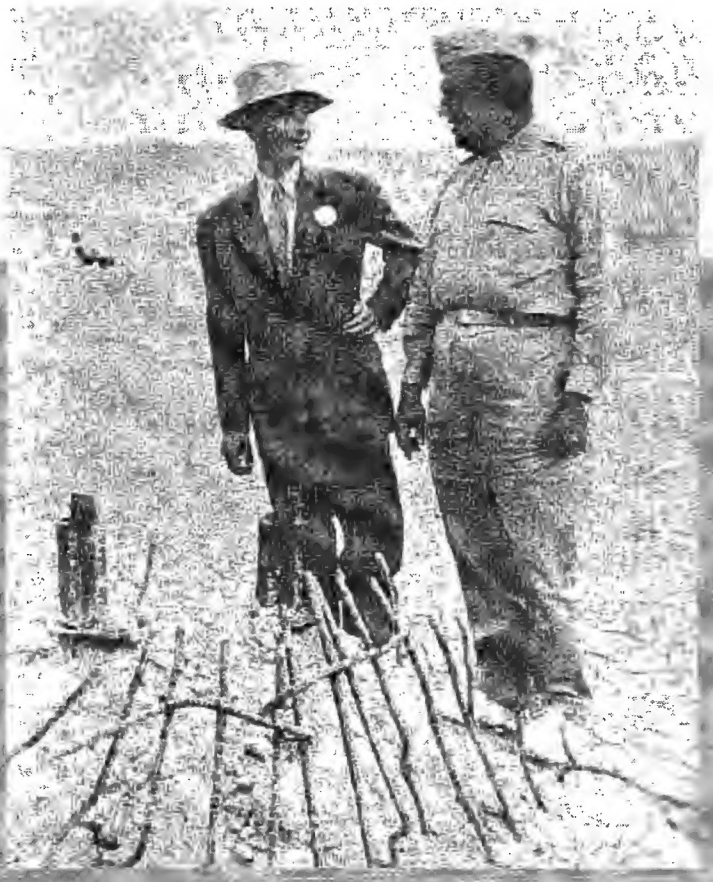
Cambridge Groundwater History

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER



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